

# CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

8

President: Mr R. Bradfield  
Secretary: Mrs R. Mills  
Treasurer: Mr L. Bransgrove  
Newsletter: Mr E. Perkins.

NOVEMBER 1976

Monthly meetings are held on the second Friday of each month at 8.00 p.m. at the Castlemaine Education Centre (SEC building,

Mostyn St.). Visitors and prospective members are invited to attend the club's sessions.

Number 3 of a series on local orchids by Mrs R. Mills

## BLUE CALEDENIA - CALADENIA CAERULA

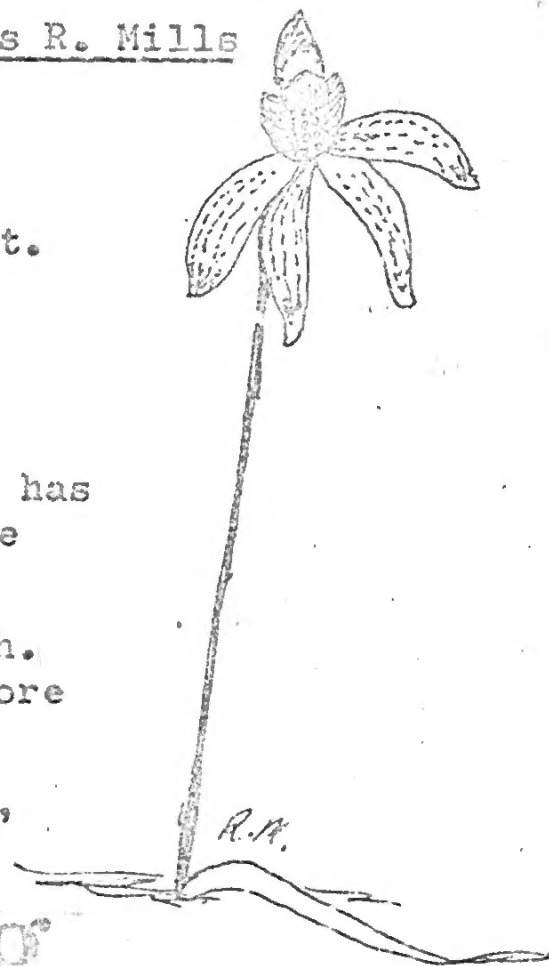
Flowering time: August and September.

This is quite a common orchid in the district. The name 'caerula' meaning 'sky-blue' aptly describes the lovely colour of the flower, which is only 15-20 mm across. Occasionally white flowers are found.

The labellum is striped with a dark blue and has a double row of bright yellow glands down the centre. The tip is white.

The stem is usually brownish and 6-20 cm high. It occasionally bears 2 flowers but one is more usual.

The leaf is ovate-lanceolate to strap-shaped, and is limp.



## Things are looking up for wombats

After 70 years of indignity as officially designated vermin, things are looking up for Victoria's wombats.

The chairman of the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board, Mr. Geoff Douglas, told a forum on Saturday that wombats could now look forward to "a beneficial change of status".

He said the wombat's status as "vermin" — a title it has held since 1906 — had been reviewed by the board and the Fisheries and Wildlife Division.

"I think it can look forward to a beneficial change of status —

except in the areas where it's a pest," he said.

"It seems to me the poor old wombat's been the meat in the sandwich, between the farmers and the rabbits.

"It appears that a more sensible and acceptable philosophy for wombat management is evolving in society."

Wombats have been in trouble with the law for 70 years in Victoria because of their ability to

break through rabbit-proof fences and open holes for the rabbits.

In 1925 a ten shilling bounty was placed on their heads, and for years thousands of pounds were paid out annually to wombat-killers.

The bounty was suspended in 1966 and abolished in 1971.

Mr. Douglas said the board's present policy was "to remove offending wombats" and leave the rest alone.

He also fore-bodded changes

in the status of dingoes — the other native animal still on the list of declared vermin.  
 "In the future the dingo may well have a different status and role," Mr. Deane said.

"It may surprise many people that there are more sheep killed in western Victoria each year by town and farm dogs—there are virtually no dingoes in western Victoria — than in the eastern highlands, where sheep losses

from dingoes are supposed to be significant."  
 The forum was organised by the Natural Resources Conservation League.

THE AGE, Oct 18,

THE CLUB RECORD SYSTEM by Mr M. Winterbottom.

Record cards have been printed for the club to compile a detailed catalogue of fauna and flora, geological and historical features of the Castlemaine area.

The card is in the main, self explanatory. The item category will refer to animal, plant, insect etc; each group will be given a letter for index purposes. If you can't fill in a card completely bring it along to a meeting, if necessary with a specimen, and no doubt there will be someone who can supply the missing details.

The Castlemaine area has been divided into a number of regions in accordance with a widely accepted scheme and records will be indexed to these regions. A map of the area boundaries is now available (part of the map is printed on the next page), so that you can fill in the map area on each card you prepare.

The success of this project will depend on club members. What is wanted is to know what is here and where it is. Don't worry if you think that your find is commonplace; fill out a card making sure that you give detailed information where the item was found.

		MAP AREA	N2	CATEGORY	P									
SCIENTIFIC NAME	<i>Pimelia linifolia</i>													
COMMON NAME	Slender rice flower													
LOCATION AND MAP REFERENCE	Common in Kalinna Park													
HABITAT	Slopes of mixed box forest													
COMMENTS	In full flower at present													
MEMBERS SIGNATURE		DATE		<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="3">N° OF SPECIMENS</th> </tr> <tr> <td>SINGLE</td> <td>FEW</td> <td>COMMON</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> </tr> </table>		N° OF SPECIMENS			SINGLE	FEW	COMMON			✓
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SINGLE	FEW	COMMON												
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J. Brown		28/10/76												

- |             |                        |              |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------|
| M Mammal    | B Bird                 | P Plant      |
| R Reptile   | I Insect, invertebrate | G Geological |
| A Amphibian |                        | H Historical |





## BARFOLD GORGE EXCURSION NOTES

The Basalt Plains The basalt plains of the Barfold area formed about a million years ago from lava flows originating from south of Kyneton (possibly south-west of Lauriston reservoir).

The flows were of a very fluid type, and filled the valleys of the old Coliban and Campaspe rivers.

There were at least five separate flows, with a considerable time lag between flows - time for the flows to weather and develop soils.

Basalt Rock The molten lava cooled to form basalt. This is a very fine grained or even glassy rock, although there may be some larger crystals. Often gas bubbles are frozen into the rock, particularly towards the top. At a later stage these holes may be filled with minerals (such as calcium carbonate).

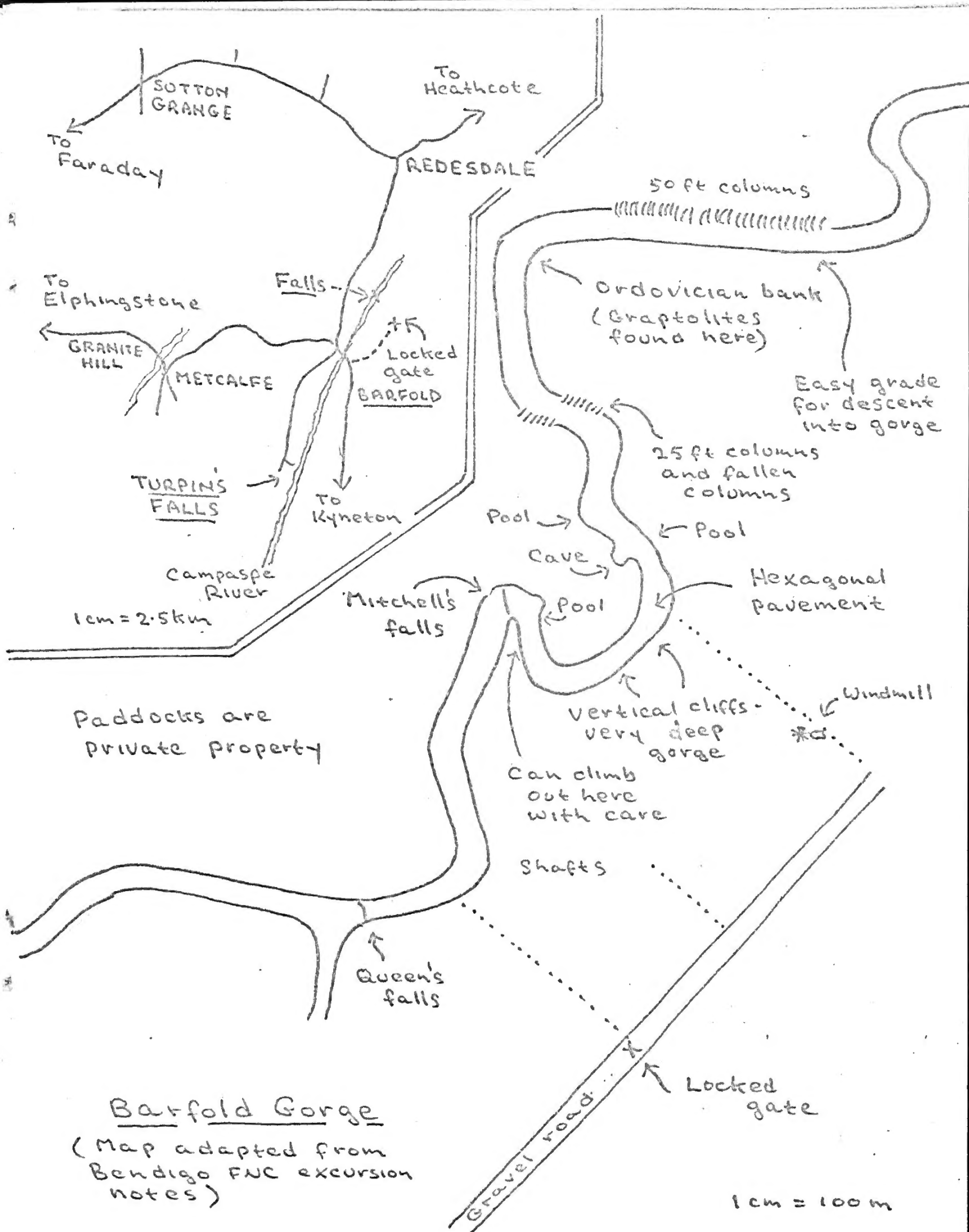
The Basalt Columns The basalt is very hot (about  $1100^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) when first formed. It gradually cools and shrinks. This shrinkage causes the basalt to crack into columns. Two sets of columns form, one set from the top and another from the bottom. They seldom match, so that there is a distinct break where they meet. The bottom set is longer than the top set. The columns have mostly 5, 6 or 7 faces. In places hillside creep is causing the columns to fall over. In other places the top of the columns have been worn away leaving a tile-like pavement.

The tunnel This probably formed after the molten rock had formed a crust - the still molten inner lava broke through the crust and left a tunnel.

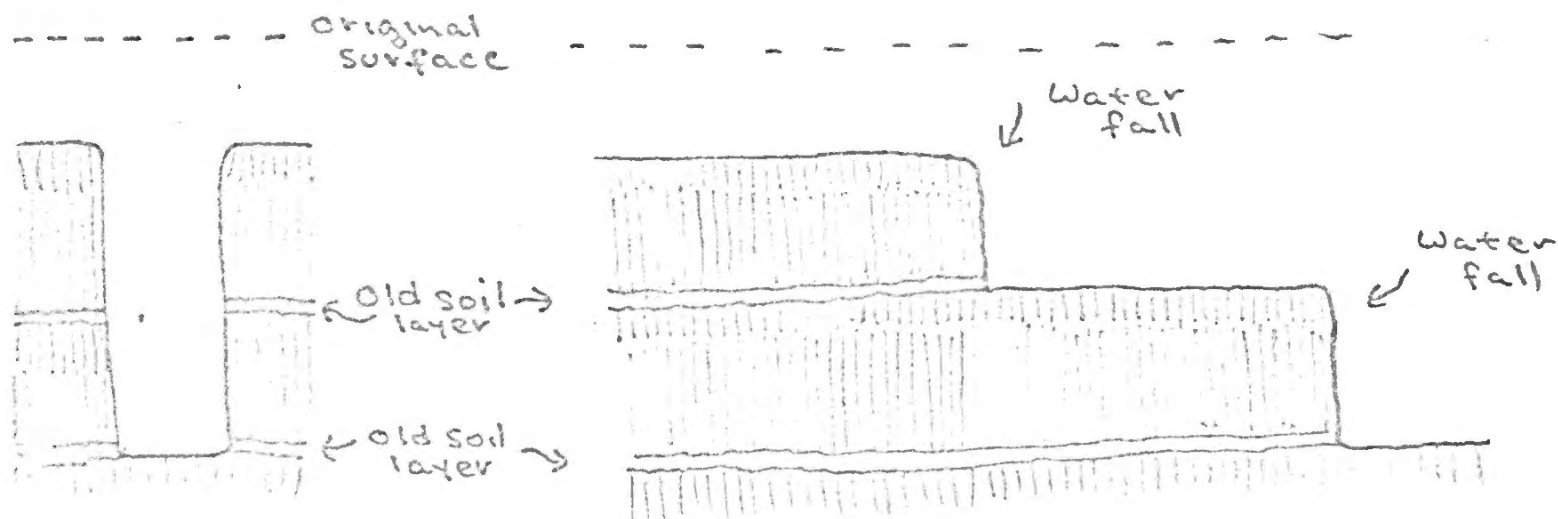
Erosion As a result of the lava flows the ancient rivers were forced to find new courses. Often these were at the edge of the basalt. Basalt is quite resistant to erosion, and the surrounding sediments wore away more quickly. As a result, the basalt is often higher than the surrounding country.



Graptolite Fossils In some spots, graptolite fossils can be found. These were coral-like animals, and are used by geologists to date rocks. The graptolites here show the rock to be of Ordovician age



The Gorge In places the river has made a course across the basalt flow. The presence of the column structure in the basalt greatly influences the rate of erosion; this and the existence of layers of rock (because of the separate flows) leads to gorge formation and waterfalls.



### Plants of the Barfold Area

Typically, basalt plains are almost treeless, and were mostly like this when first settled. A distinctive plant is the tree-violet (*Hymenanthera dentata*) with its orange lichen.

In the gorge itself is an interesting variety of plants including many exotics -possibly brought here by flooding. Rarest is the Australian Anchor plant (one specimen); most noticable is the stinging nettle-you are advised to recognise this at an early stage.

<i>Hymenanthera dentata</i> (Tree violet)	<i>Poterium polyganum</i> (Salad burnet)
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> (Yellow wood-	<i>Rosa rubignosa</i> (Sweet briar)
<i>Urtica incisa</i> (Nettle) sorrel)	<i>Mentha australis</i> (River mint)
<i>Pleurosorus rutifolius</i> (Blanket fern)	<i>M. pulegium</i> (Pennyroyal)
<i>Solanum nigrum</i> (Black nightshade)	<i>Phragmites communis</i> (Common reed)
<i>Chenopodium pumilio</i> (Clammy goose-foot)	<i>Typha angustifolia</i> (Bulrush)
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i> (Horehound)	<i>Conium maculatum</i> (Hemlock)
<i>Xanthium spinosum</i> (Bathurst burr)	<i>Discaria pubescens</i> (Australian Achor plant)
<i>Pelargonium australe</i> (Austral-storks-bill)	<i>Altenanthera denticulata</i> (Lesser joyweed)
<i>Clematis microphylla</i> (Small-leaved leaved clematis)	<i>Verbascum thaspus</i> (Great mullein)
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i> (Blackwood)	<i>V. virgatum</i> (Twiggy mullein)
<i>A. implexa</i> (Lightwood)	<i>Scirpus vellidus</i> (River club-rush)
<i>A. retinodes</i> (Wirilda)	<i>Carex appressa</i> (Tall sedge)
<i>Callistemon palludosis</i> (River bottlebrush)	<i>C. tereticaulis</i> (Round sedge)
<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i> (Woolly tea-tree)	<i>Inula graveolens</i> (Stink-wort)
<i>Banksia marginata</i> (Silver banksia)	<i>Casuarina stricta</i> (Drooping she-oak)
	<i>Senecio lautus</i> (Variable groundsel)
	<i>Limosella australis</i> (Austral mud-wort)
	<i>Calotis anthemoides</i> (Cut-leaf burr daisy)

Pelargonium rodneyanum (Magenta storks bill)	Helipterum anthemoides (Chamomile sunray)
Asplenium flabellifolium (Necklace fern)	Polygonum hydropiper (Water pepper)
Blechnum minus (Soft water fern)	Eucalyptus melliodora (Yellow box)
Salix alba (Willow)	E. camaldulensis (Red gum)
Ulex europaeus (Gorse)	Correa glabra (Rock correa)
Lythrum salicaria (Purple loose-strife)	Isotoma axillaris (Rock isotome)

#### SOME OBSERVATIONS MADE DURING THE ECLIPSE

A summary of some of the observations made during the eclipse, mostly by students at Castlemaine High School, of animal behaviour in the Castlemaine district.

Fowls Kept eating; started to return to their pen; went to roost and started to lay; returned to pen; were placed in a huddle by the rooster; chickens went under the hen; rooster crowed(3); went into stables; came closer to the house; went to roost; began eating (pre-roosting behaviour); went to sleep; stayed awake.

Dog Curled up; all 3 went to sleep.

Cockatoos Went to big gum tree; were very noisy; pet went to sleep; pet went to sleep, then squawked.

Magpies Went to nest; started calling; began showing morning behavior after the eclipse i.e. started searching for worms on the lawn tennis courts; went to roost; went away.

Pigeons Went to sleep.

Sparrows Flew into rose bush; sat on wire and made morning type calls; stopped singing.

Wattlebirds Flew into bushland.

Starlings Sat on wire and made morning type calls

Blackbirds Quite noisy after the eclipse.

Ducks Went into yard; came closer to the house; ducklings agitated.

Ravens Kept calling, other birds quiet.

Frogs No activity; started calling (3 observations)

Bees Returned to beehive; left the flowers but returned later.

Guinea pigs Kept eating greedily.

Bush Became quiet.

Horses Began running, then settled down; began to gallop.

Budgie Went to sleep(2), hopped on swing; began to ring bell.

Cat Ran outside and became uneasy; went to sleeping area (3)

Cows Came to be fed; came to be milked(2), lay down to sleep.

Insects Crickets chirped; many beetles flying; mosquitoes came out.

Pet possum Didn't move.

One student sailing at Yarrawonga noticed the sky darken to the south. One had a baby brother (4 y) lie down to sleep; a baby (18 m) became uneasy. About 1/3 were outside for the eclipse, another third remained inside. The others rushed in and out.



## CLUB PROGRAM

November meeting Friday Nov 12,

Speaker: Mr J. Wheeler.

Subject: Setting up a nature reserve; Care of sea birds.

Photoflora 74 Tuesday Nov 16

We have been invited by the camera club to a screening of 'Photoflora 74'. This is a program of nature slides, and is highly recommended. Education Centre at 8 p.m.

December meeting Friday Dec 10

Speaker: Mr A. Hartup.

Subject: Local plants and animals

January In recess.

February meeting Friday Feb 11

This is the annual meeting.

Speaker: Mr G. Sitch

Subject: Propagation of native plants.

March meeting Friday March 11

Subject: Astronomy

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions paid now are current until the end of 1977.

Single: \$3

Family: \$5

Student/Junior: \$1.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Receipts: Magazine sales \$2.10

Expenses: Printing (Sept, Oct)

\$5.20. Balance: \$53.32. (Record card account not yet received)

## KALIMNA PARK COMMITTEE

The next meeting is on Wed Dec 1, at 8 p.m. in the Education Centre. The committee is looking for new members; all interested club members are invited to attend.

## NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday 25 Nov, at the Ed. centre.

Saturday November 13 Barfold

Leave Education Centre for Barfold Gorge at 1.00 sharp. This includes a descent into the gorge, a walk along the gorge bottom (some over rocks) and a steep climb from the gorge. Bring a substantial afternoon tea. No barbeques please.

Saturday December 11 Mt Alexander

Our final excursion for the year. Leave the Education Centre at 1.30.

Leader: Mr Winterbottom.

Saturday Feb 12 Native gardens and/or Kaweka

March Excursion Evening; Astronomy with a pair of binoculars.

Sunday April 10. Vaughan District

All day walking excursion.

Leader: Mr Bradfield.

## ADDITIONS TO CLUB LIBRARY

Vascular Flora of Victoria by Beauglehole and Parsons. This gives the major grid distribution of Victorian Plants, and has been received from the WVFNCA.

Geelong FNC Magazine Two issues.

## Cage moth

Found in North Castlemaine by Marilyn Mills.

On Cape-broom - made of soft twigs

